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Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 EA-12 ISO-00 OES-07 /020 W
----------046195 251111Z /10
R 250531Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3899

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 03802

DEPARTMENT PASS TO BERNARD ZABOS, US NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: WMO, TGEN, CW
SUBJECT: US SCIENTIFIC TEAM TO PENRHYN ISLAND

REF: (A) STATE 163838, (B) WELLINGTON 2387

1. FOLLOWING INFORMATION CONCERNING THE PROPOSED NOAA SCIENTIFIC TEAM PROGRAM TO PENRHYN ISLAND IS KEYED TO QUERIES PRESENTED PARA 1, REF (A).

A. NO COOK ISLAND AIR TRANSPORT AVAILABLE. PERIODIC GOVERNMENT OF NEW ZEALAND (GNZ) MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT CALIBRATION FLIGHTS TO PENRHYN. AIRSTRIP CAPABLE OF HANDLING HERCULES-SIZE AIRCRAFT. PERIODIC BUT NOT REGULARLY SCHEDULED COMMERCIAL/CHARTER SHIPPING AVAILABLE IN COOKS. SHIPS SMALL BUT CAN HANDLE VEHICLES OF TRACTOR SIZE.

B. PENRHYN ISLANDERS IMPORT MUCH OF THEIR DAILY FOOD REQUIREMENTS. SCIENTIFIC TEAM WOULD, THEREFORE, NEED TO TAKE FOOD WITH THEM. BASIC SHELTER ONLY AVAILABLE. FRESH WATER AVAILABLE IN MODERATE AMOUNTS.

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C. OBSERVERS WOULD NEED TO COME FROM NEW ZEALAND. SKILLED MAINTENANCE PERSONNEL WOULD ALSO NEED TO COME FROM NEW ZEALAND, BUT LOCAL UNSKILLED LABOR AVAILABLE.

D. GENERATOR EXISTS ON ISLAND FOR LIMITED AMOUNT ELECTRICAL POWER.

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E. WE ARE CHECKING AND WILL ADVISE.

F. ONLY BASIC MEDICAL FACILITIES AVAILABLE. EMERGENCY EVACUATION "ON-CALL" BASIS ONLY, VIA GNZ AIRCRAFT OR COOK ISLANDS BOAT.
G. ONLY APPROXIMATELY 3 - 4 MILES LAND AREA SUITABLE FOR VEHICLES. GNZ ADVISES TWO TRACTORS PRESENT ON PENRHYN AND SUFFICIENT FUEL IS PRESENT FOR THEIR USE. (REFTEL B FROM COOK ISLANDS GOVERNMENT SAYS THREE TRACTORS BUT TWO BROKEN DOWN.) ANY ADDITIONAL FUEL REQUIREMENTS WOULD NEED TO BE IMPORTED. ALUMINUM DINGY WITH OUTBOARD MOTOR AVAILABLE.

H. MINIMAL WORK AREAS AND STORAGE; NO PERMANENT METEORO-LOGICAL FACILITIES.

I. ALL EXPENDABLES WOULD HAVE TO BE IMPORTED FROM US OR NZ.

J. RAROTONGA WOULD HAVE ADEQUATE AIR AND SEA STAGING FACILITIES; AITUTAKI FACILITIES MARGINAL FOR AIR AND BY SEA WITH LIGHTER ONLY.

2. FOREGOING INFORMATION PROVIDED BY GNZ MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WHICH ADVISES THAT THEY ARE CHECKING ADDITIONAL DETAILS WITH GNZ METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE AND MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT. WILL ADVISE. COOK ISLANDS GOVERN-MENT (CIG) HAS BEEN SIMILARLY QUERIED REGARDING SPECIFIC
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LOGISTICAL CAPABILITIES, BUT IN OPINION OF MFA OFFICERS, AND IN LIGHT OF CIG RESPONSE (SEE REFTEL B), UNLIKELY COOK ISLANDS COULD PROVIDE MUCH IN THE WAY OF ASSISTANCE WITH EXCEPTION OF UNSKILLED LABOR.

3. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FROM GNZ METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE THAT BERNARD ZABOS OF US NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE WILL BE VISITING WELLINGTON SEPTEMBER 9-11 AND WILL BE DISCUSSING PROPOSED PENRHYN ISLAND UPPER AIR WEATHER STATION WITH GNZ OFFICIALS. ZABOS MAY WANT TO REVIEW FOREGOING WITH METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE. EMBASSY SUGGESTS CONSIDERABLE DIFFERENCE EXISTS BETWEEN THEORETICAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FROM GNZ AND CIG AND PRACTICAL REALITY. KEY ISSUE WILL BE WHO PAYS. COOK ISLANDS GOVERNMENT ALREADY HEAVILY SUBSIDIZED BY GNZ AND CHANCE OF CIG ASSISTING WITH EXCEP-TION OF LOCAL LABOR AND PERHAPS LOCAL TRANSPORTATION ALMOST NIL. THE CAPACITY IS SIMPLY NOT THERE. EXTENT TO WHICH GNZ WILLING TO SUPPORT PROPOSAL OUT OF ITS RESOURCES WILL NEED TO BE DISCUSSED AND ASSESSED BY ZABOS DURING HIS VISIT. EMBASSY WOULD WELCOME OPPORTUNITY TO MEET AND DISCUSS PROPOSAL WITH ZABOS. SELDEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Subject: US SCIENTIFIC TEAM TO PENRHYN ISLAND
TAGS: TGEN, CW, NZ, US, WMO
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